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The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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CINEPROBE

An Evening with Kenneth Anger

Tuesday, March 12, 1974

Screening of: ANGER MAGICK LANTERN CYCLE (1947-1974) - FIREWORKS, PUCE MOMENT, RABBIT'S MOON, EAUX D'ARTIFICE, INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME, SCORPIO RISING, KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOS, INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER, LUCIFER RISING. 157 minutes.

The filmmaker will be present for a discussion with the audience after the screening.

ANGER, Kenneth DIR USA (Santa Monica, California 1932 -) With Maya Deren (q.v.) the most important name in the development of the New American Cinema. Fascinated by magic, myth, and ritual, he began film-making at an early age and made his first significant contribution with FIREWORKS (47), a brilliant portrait of homosexuality. After several evocative works in Europe he created the obsessive SCORPIO RISING (63) a societal poem. -- Georges Sadoul, Dictionary of Film Makers

To a degree greater than any other prominent independent film-maker, Kenneth Anger has managed to create a cohesive oeuvre - a body of work in which each individual film plays a clear role as part of a larger structure. At least three basic unifying principles can be identified in his work. The most fundamental organizing factor linking Anger's films is the linear development of his technique and the elaboration of his chosen themes, which reflect the progressive evolution of his sensibility over the course of time. This process underlies the career of any artist, whether he works in cinema or another medium, who deserves the name. Although the role of the artist's personal intellectual and psychological history should not be overlooked in this developmental process, the artist's external social and physical environment also function as crucial shaping forces. Despite the primacy in Anger's films of occult elements and related material dealing with "interior" or "alternate" worlds, his personal travels in the United States and Europe and the cultural history of the past quarter-century cannot be ignored as factors that have helped to determine his creative evolution. In fact, his work might reasonably be divided into phases that correspond to the cities where he has lived, providing two "Los Angeles periods," an intervening "Paris era," and his current "London phase."

Furthermore, Anger, more than any other independent film-maker (with the possible exception of Andy Warhol) has been part of the social history of his times, thanks to his peripheral - but historically recorded - involvement in phenomena as diverse as the 1967 Pentagon march and l'affaire Manson; this fact has had a definite impact on his career as an artist.

In addition to this basic linear development, Anger's artistic output has been given its distinctive form by the operation of two further architectonic forces, operating presumably on both the conscious and unconscious levels of his sensibility. As I see them, these forces are:

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1) A tendency to make each successive film comment upon or extend the formal and and thematic elements contained in the film that directly precedes it in time. This process involves more than the simple elaboration of motifs and refinement of techniques, since any two successive films tend to complement one another in a manner that makes them a self-contained pair - a "matched set."

2) A similar, but broader and more complex, drive toward structure which turns individual films into units within groups that might be called "constellations." The aesthetic elements of each film in such a group have a distinct relationship to corresponding elements in the other members of its constellation. These constellations, in turn, are intermediate structures which have their own role to play in the larger unity of Anger's oeuvre as it exists today. -- John Burchfield, Kenneth Anger: The Shape of his Achievement

ANGER MAGICK LANTERN CYCLE (1947-1974)

FIREWORKS. 1947. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept and editing by Kenneth Anger. Camera assistant: Chester Kessler. Music by Respighi. Filmed in Hollywood. 15 minutes. Cast: Kenneth Anger (Dreamer), Gordon Gray (First Sailor), Bill Seltzer (Second Sailor). Synopsis: A dissatisfied dreamer awakes, goes out in the night seeking "a light" and is drawn through the needle's eye.

PUCE MOMENT. 1949. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept, camera and editing by Kenneth Anger. Music by Jonathan Halper. Filmed in Hollywood. 6 1/2 minutes. Cast: Yvonne Marquis (Star). Synopsis: Afternoon of a Film Star in Twenties' Hollywood.

RABBIT'S MOON. 1950. Puck Films Production. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept and editing by Kenneth Anger. Camera assistant: Tourjansky. Music by The Temptations. Filmed in Paris. 15 minutes. Cast: Andre Soubeyran (Pierrot), Claude Revenant (Harlequin), Nadine Valence (Columbine). Synopsis: Fable of the Unattainable (the Moon) combining elements of commedia dell'arte with Japanese myth.

EAUX D'ARTIFICE. 1953. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept and editing by Kenneth Anger. Camera assistant: Thad Lovett. Music by Vivaldi. Filmed in Tivoli (Italy). 13 minutes. Cast: Carmilla Salvatorelli (Lady). Synopsis: Hide and Seek in a night-time labyrinth.

INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME. 1954. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept and editing by Kenneth Anger. Camera assistant: Robert Straede. Music by Janacek. Filmed in Hollywood. 40 minutes. Cast: Samson De Brier (Lord Shiva, Osiris, The Great Beast), Cameron (The Scarlet Woman, Kali), Katy Kadell (Isis), Renata Loome (Lilith), Anais Nin (Astarte), Paul Mathison (Pan), Curtis Harrington (Slave), Kenneth Anger (Hecate), Peter Loome (Ganymede). Synopsis: Lord Shiva wakes. A convocation of magicians in the guise of figures from mythology: a masquerade party at which Pan is the prize. The action takes place in Xanadu.

SCORPIO RISING. 1963. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept, camera and editing by Kenneth Anger. Music by Little Peggy March, The Angels, Bobby Vinton, Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, The Crystals, The Ran-Dells, Kris Jensen, Claudine Clark, Gene McDaniels, The Surfaris. Filmed in Brooklyn and Manhattan. 28 minutes. Cast: Bruce Byron (Scorpio), Johnny Sapienza (Taurus), Frank Carifi (Leo), John Palone (Pinstripe), Ernie Allo (Joker), Barry Rubin (Fall Guy), Steve Crandell (Blondie), Bill Dorfmann (Back), Johnny Dodds (Kid). Synopsis: A "high" view of the Myth of the American Motorcyclist. The machine as totem, from toy to terror. Thanatos in chrome and black leather. Part I - Boys & Bolts. Part II - Image Maker. Part III - Walpurgis Party. Part IV - Rebel Rouser.

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KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOS. 1965. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept and editing by Kenneth Anger. Camera assistant: Arnold Baskin. Music by The Parris Sisters. Filmed in San Bernadino. 3 1/2 minutes. Cast: Sandy Trent (Car Customiser). Synopsis: Pygmalion and his machine mistress.

INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER. 1969. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept, camera and editing by Kenneth Anger. Sound by Mick Jagger (Moog Synthesizer). Filmed in San Francisco. 11 minutes. Cast: Speed Hacker (Wand-bearer), Lenore Kandel (Deaconess), William Beutel (Deacon), Kenneth Anger (Magus), Van Leuven (Acolyte), Harvey Bialy (Brother), Timotha (Sister), Anton Szandor La Vey (Satan), Bobby Beausoliel (Lucifer). Synopsis: The shadowing forth of Lord Lucifer, as the Powers gather at a midnight mass.

LUCIFER RISING. 1974. Puck Film Productions. Directed by Kenneth Anger. Concept and editing by Kenneth Anger. Camera assistants: Michael Cooper, Alistair Londonderry. Sound by The Alternative Enlightenment System. Filmed in Luxor, Karnak, Gizeh, Externsteine, London, Avebury. PART I. 25 minutes. Cast of Part I: Myriam Gibril (Isis), Donald Cammell (Osiris), Marianne Faithfull (Lilith), Kenneth Anger (Magus), Leslie Huggins (Lucifer). Synopsis: Isis (Nature) wakes. Osiris (Death) answers. Lilith (Destroyer) climbs to the Place of Sacrifice. The Magus activates the Circle until Lucifer - Bringer of Light - breaks through.

Filmography:

WHO HAS BEEN ROCKING MY DREAM BOAT? (41), TINSEL TREE (42), PRISONER OF MARS (42), THE NEST (43), ESCAPE EPISODE (44), DRASTIC DEMISE (45), ESCAPE EPISODE, II (46), FIREWORKS (47), PUCE MOMENT (49) RABBIT'S MOON (Fr. 50), EAUX D'ARTIFICE (It. 53), INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME (54), THELEMA ABBEY (It. 55), SCORPIO RISING (63), KUSTOM KAR KOMMANDOS (64), INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER (69), LUCIFER RISING Brit. 74).

Kenneth Anger is the recipient of a Film-Maker's Grant, Ford Foundation, 1964.

The films of Kenneth Anger are distributed by Film-Maker's Cooperative, 175 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

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Future Cineprobes: Tuesdays at 5:30, filmmaker present

March 19 - Sandra Hochman (YEAR OF THE WOMAN).
April 16 - Larry Gottheim (HORIZONS and BARN RUSHES).
April 23 - Fred Halsted (L.A. PLAYS ITSELF and SEX GARAGE).
May 14 - James B. Harris (SOME CALL IT LOVING [SLEEPING BEAUTY]).
May 28 - (tentative) Mirelle Dansereau (LA VIE REVEE).
June 11 - Danny Lyon (LLANITO, and EL MOJADO, premiere).

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